CLAIMS

1. A method of conserving storage space, the method comprising:

receiving media content that includes a plurality of portions, the plurality of portions including both one or more highlight portions and one or more non-highlight portions; and

saving, to a storage device, only the one or more highlight portions.

2. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the media content comprises a television program.

3. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the media content comprises a multimedia program.

4. A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising receiving, from a remote source, an indication of which of the plurality of portions are highlight portions and which of the plurality of portions are non-highlight portions.

5. A method as recited in claim 4, wherein the remote source is also the source of the media content.

6. A method as recited in claim 4, further comprising receiving the indication concurrent with receiving the media content.

7.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the saving comprises:

initially saving all of the plurality of portions to the storage device;

receiving an indication of which of the plurality of portions are highlight portions and which of the plurality of portions are non-highlight portions; and

deleting, from the storage device, the non-highlight portions.

8.   A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:

receiving comments from a viewer of the highlight portions; and

communicating the comments to a comment server for access by other viewers of the media content.

9.   A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:

beginning rendering of the highlight portions;

identifying an amount of time that the highlight portions have been rendered; and

rendering one or more advertisements after the amount of time exceeds a threshold amount.

10.   A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:

receiving meta data corresponding to the media content;

identifying one or more portions of the media content in response to user inputs; and

rendering the identified one or more portions of the media content.

11.   One or more computer-readable memories containing a computer program that is executable by a processor to perform the method recited in claim 1.

12.   One or more computer-readable media having stored thereon a plurality of instructions that, when executed by one or more processors of a computer, causes the one or more processors to perform acts including:

identifying a plurality of portions of media content that are not highlight portions; and

discarding the plurality of portions prior to storing the remaining portions of the media content.

13.   One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 12, identifying comprises receiving an indication of which portions are highlight portions and which portions are non-highlight portions.

14.   One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 12, further comprising storing the remaining portions of the media content on a local storage device.

15.   One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 12, wherein the discarding comprises:

initially saving all of the plurality of portions to the storage device; and

deleting, from the storage device, the portions that are not highlight portions.

16.   A method comprising:

receiving meta data corresponding to a television program;

identifying one or more portions of the television program in response to user inputs; and

rendering the identified one or more portions of the television program.

17.   A method as recited in claim 16, wherein the identifying comprises locating a next occurrence of user input search criteria in the meta data and determining a location of the television program corresponding to the next occurrence in the meta data, and wherein the rendering comprises beginning playback of the television program at the determined location.

18.   A method as recited in claim 16, wherein the identifying comprises locating a plurality of occurrences of user input search criteria in the meta data and determining a plurality of portions of the television program corresponding to the occurrences, and wherein the rendering comprises rendering the plurality of portions.

19.   One or more computer-readable memories containing a computer program that is executable by a processor to perform the method recited in claim 16.

20. A system comprising:

a storage device to store a plurality of comments corresponding to media content; and

a comment handler, coupled to the storage device, to

receive comments corresponding to the media content from a plurality of different sources and based on a plurality of different versions of the media content,

store the received comments on the storage device, and

make the stored plurality of comments available to devices rendering the media content.

21. A system as recited in claim 20, wherein one of the plurality of different versions is a live version and another of the plurality of different versions is a recorded version, and wherein the plurality of comments include both comments to the live version and comments to the recorded version.

22. A system as recited in claim 21, wherein the comments to the live version comprise a live discussion of users viewing the live version.

23. A system as recited in claim 20, wherein each of the received comments includes:

an identifier of the corresponding media content;

an identifier of a location, within the media content, that the comment corresponds to; and

an identifier of the user that made the comment.

24. A method comprising:

allowing comments to be made by a plurality of viewers of a plurality of different versions of a program;

consolidating the comments; and

making the comments available to subsequent viewers of one of the plurality of different versions of the program or another version of the program.

25. A method as recited in claim 24, wherein the consolidating comprises consolidating the comments at a centralized location.

26. A method as recited in claim 24, wherein the plurality of different versions include one or more of: a version stored on magnetic tape, a version stored on an optical storage device, and a streaming multimedia content version.

27. A method as recited in claim 24, further comprising:

identifying a particular group that the comments correspond to; and

making the comments available only to viewers that are associated with the particular group.

28. One or more computer-readable memories containing a computer program that is executable by a processor to perform the method recited in claim 24.

29. One or more computer-readable media having stored thereon a plurality of instructions that, when executed by one or more processors of a computer, causes the one or more processors to perform acts including:

receiving multimedia content;

storing the multimedia content locally;

receiving comments regarding the multimedia content;

storing the comments locally; and

allowing the comments to be accessed during subsequent playback of the stored multimedia content.

30. One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 29, wherein the receiving comprises receiving the multimedia content from a remote source.

31. One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 29, wherein the receiving comprises receiving the multimedia content from a local video camera.

32. One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 29, further comprising allowing a plurality of users to access the stored multimedia content, and wherein the allowing comprises allowing the plurality of users to access the comments during playback of the stored multimedia content.

33.   A method comprising:

identifying a synchronization point in a multimedia program, wherein the synchronization point occurs an amount of time after the beginning of the multimedia program; and

using the synchronization point as a common temporal reference point for the multimedia program.

34.   A method as recited in claim 33, wherein the using comprises using the synchronization point as a reference point for comments corresponding to the multimedia program.

35.   A method as recited in claim 33, further comprising identifying a reference point that indicates an offset from the synchronization point.

36.   A method as recited in claim 33, wherein the identifying comprises receiving an indication from a source of the multimedia program of the synchronization point.

37.   A method as recited in claim 33, wherein the synchronization point is received in a communication separate from the multimedia program.

38.   A method as recited in claim 33, wherein the multimedia program is received from a local storage device and wherein the identifying comprises receiving the synchronization point from a remote location.

39. A method as recited in claim 33, wherein the identifying comprises using, as the synchronization point, a particular frame of the multimedia program.

40. A method as recited in claim 39, wherein the particular frame comprises a frame including a title screen of the multimedia program.

41. One or more computer-readable memories containing a computer program that is executable by a processor to perform the method recited in claim 33.

42. One or more computer-readable media having stored thereon a plurality of instructions that, when executed by one or more processors of a computer, causes the one or more processors to perform acts including:

receiving an indication of media content from a client computing device;

identifying a location of the media content to use as a synchronization point for the media content; and

indicating, to the client computing device, the synchronization point.

43. One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 42, wherein the receiving an indication comprises receiving a request for the media content.

44. One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 42, further comprising identifying a reference point that identifies an offset from the synchronization point.

45. A method comprising:

identifying an amount of time that particular media content has been rendered on a device; and

rendering one or more advertisements after the amount of time exceeds a threshold amount.

46. A method as recited in claim 45, further comprising preventing any more of the particular media content from being rendered until after the one or more advertisements has been rendered.

47. A method as recited in claim 45, wherein the particular media content is rendered on the device over a plurality of rendering sessions.

48. A method as recited in claim 45, further comprising resetting the amount of time after the one or more advertisements has been rendered, and repeating both the identifying an amount of time and rendering one or more advertisements.

49. A method as recited in claim 45, further comprising modifying the threshold amount if the particular media content includes other advertisements.

50. A method as recited in claim 49, wherein the modifying comprises modifying the threshold amount only if the other advertisements have been rendered on the device.

51. A method as recited in claim 45, further comprising modifying the threshold amount if a playback speed of the particular media content is altered.

52. A method as recited in claim 45, further comprising accessing meta data corresponding to the particular media content to identify a preference point of where rendering of the media content should be stopped and the one or more advertisements rendered.

53. A method as recited in claim 45, wherein the particular media content comprises a television program.

54. A method as recited in claim 45, wherein the particular media content comprises media content retrieved from a local storage device.

55. A method as recited in claim 45, further comprising modifying the threshold amount based at least in part on the amount of a fee paid by a user of the device.

56. A method as recited in claim 45, wherein the media content includes a plurality of portions, including both one or more highlight portions and one or more non-highlight portions, and further comprising saving, to a storage device, only the one or more highlight portions.

57. A method as recited in claim 45, further comprising:

receiving meta data corresponding to the particular media content;

identifying one or more portions of the particular media content in response to user inputs; and

rendering the identified one or more portions of the particular media content.

58. A method as recited in claim 45, further comprising:

receiving comments, corresponding to the particular media content, from a content server, wherein the comments have been input by other users that the particular media content has been rendered to; and

rendering the comments along with the particular media content.

59. A method as recited in claim 45, further comprising:

receiving, from a user that the particular media content is being rendered to, a comment regarding the particular media content; and

forwarding the comment to a remote comment server for storage.

60. A method as recited in claim 59, further comprising:

identifying a synchronization point in the particular media content, wherein the synchronization point occurs an amount of time after the beginning of the media content; and

identifying a location of the media content that the comment corresponds to based on an offset from the synchronization point.

61. A method as recited in claim 45, further comprising accumulating points when advertisements are rendered, wherein the accumulated points can be subsequently redeemed for one or more of goods and services.

62. One or more computer-readable memories containing a computer program that is executable by a processor to perform the method recited in claim 45.

63. One or more computer-readable media having stored thereon a plurality of instructions that, when executed by one or more processors of a computer, causes the one or more processors to perform acts including:

playing back media content;

checking whether an amount of time that the media content has been played back has elapsed; and

playing back one or more advertisements after the amount of time has elapsed.

64. One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 63, wherein the media content is rendered on the computer over a plurality of rendering sessions.

65. One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 63, further comprising modifying the threshold amount if the particular media content includes other advertisements.

66. One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 63, further comprising accessing meta data corresponding to the particular media content to identify a preference point of where rendering of the media content should be stopped and the one or more advertisements rendered.

67. A system comprising:

one or more rendering components to render a program; and

an advertisement controller to monitor how long the program has been rendered since the last advertisement was rendered, and to render one or more additional advertisements if the amount of time since the last advertisement was rendered exceeds a threshold amount.

68. A system as recited in claim 67, wherein the one or more rendering components comprise an audio rendering component to play audio content of the program and a video rendering component to play video content of the program.

69. A system as recited in claim 67, wherein the one or more rendering components render the program over a plurality of rendering sessions.

70. A system as recited in claim 67, further comprising modifying the threshold amount if the program includes other advertisements.

71. A system as recited in claim 67, further comprising accessing meta data corresponding to the program to identify a preference point of where rendering of the program should be stopped and the one or more additional advertisements rendered.

72. A method comprising:

rendering, by a device, a program; and

identifying one or more portions of the program that include commercials;

disabling, while the one or more portions that include commercials are being rendered, a control of the device that allow one or more portions of the program to be skipped.

73. A method as recited in claim 72, wherein the program comprises a television program.

74. A method as recited in claim 72, wherein the control comprises a fast forward button.

75. A method as recited in claim 72, wherein the control comprises a skip button.